

Grievance Officer Report

Steven M. Durbin 4/24/2020

I have been working on a number of issues since my last report (4/3/2020), all from home, of course, given the current COVID-19 state of affairs. A brief update on the most relevant:

1. We had a step two grievance hearing scheduled for Friday March 13th regarding Sindecuse. I agreed to put that in abeyance temporarily as the situation at WMU was changing rapidly and administrators were anticipating emergency meetings. That hearing was held on April 14th via Webex, with Sue Nelson accompanying me, and Nancy Mansberger and Warren Hills representing WMU. We received notification on 23 April 2020 that the grievance was not upheld, although no compelling argument was provided by WMU.
2. We had a step one grievance hearing scheduled for Friday March 13th regarding CHHS. That meeting was put in abeyance at short notice, and was held on Monday April 6th via Webex. The issue has been amicably resolved.
3. I followed up with a faculty member who is working to update a job description, as the responsibilities are excessive and unrealistic. This issue is ongoing, and only exacerbated by the current switch to online classes. We do have some support within the administration for resolving this issue, but the current draconian hiring freeze makes progress problematic.
4. We have heard a response will be forthcoming shortly on the OIE grievance. We hope to have it within the next week.
5. I am working on several legacy issues, one of which concerns what was once called the OVPR, and a grievance filed by my predecessor regarding overload. I am still working to initiate the requested mediation hearing, but have been focused on the more contemporary grievances given their timeline.
6. I have attended several department meetings (virtually) to solicit information and opinions from bargaining unit members regarding contract negotiations. All of these meetings include more general questions related to the current switch to “teach at home using your own resources” which perhaps is more appropo than “online classes.”
7. I continue to support the efforts of Natalio Ohana to track potential issues with our contract during this emergency period. While we need to be strategic about raising issues and pursuing resolution, we also need to not lose sight of them in the whirlwind that currently defines our day to day existence. Today is Natalio’s last day in that role, unfortunately. He certainly brought a great deal of energy and dedication to the job.